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ABSTRACT

Noting the need for parents, schools, and community members to work together to meet the needs of unsupervised adolescents during after-school hours, this practicum was designed to address those needs in one middle school. Lack of adolescent after-school supervision was documented by means of a parent interest survey distributed to parents of children who would be attending middle school the following year, a school district committee of parents and district officials, and telephone communication with parents. The goal of the practicum was to have parents develop an after-school program for unsupervised adolescents that incorporated age-appropriate activities. Measurement of practicum outcomes focused on documenting major patterns of activities and examining the process of parental involvement. Process data indicated that during group meetings, parents indicated that a low cost, supervised, and diverse after-school program with age appropriate activities would solve the problem of lack of adult supervision. Parents, adolescents, and educators formed written policies and procedures, job descriptions, and activities for an after-school program. Parents used e-mail as an alternate method for communicating program decisions. The outcomes data indicated that parents' attendance at scheduled meetings was low but did not interfere with them being advocates for change. Parents developed materials that included policies and procedures, job descriptions, a volunteer form, a list of age-appropriate activities, and a program brochure that could be replicated for other adolescent after-school programs. (Three appendices include the parent interest survey, an after-school activity form, and a list of age-appropriate adolescent activities. Contains 34 references.) (KB)

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A Parent Process in Developing an After-School Program For Unsupervised Middle School Adolescents

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Abstract

A Parent Process for Developing an After-School Program for Unsupervised Middle School Adolescents. Kieslich, Anita Frances, 1999: Practicum Report Nova Southeastern University, ED.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Unsupervised Adolescents/After-school Programs/Middle School Studies/ Latchkey Children/Self Care/Parent Involvement/Childcare.

This practicum was designed to solve the problem of unsupervised adolescents during after-school hours in a middle school.

During the group meetings, parents identified that a low-cost, supervised, and diverse after-school program with age appropriate activities would solve the problem of nonsupervision. Assigning group and independent tasks the parents, adolescents, and educators formulated and created written policies and procedures, job descriptions, and activities for the program. Parents used e-mail as an alternate method for communicating program decisions.

Analysis of the data revealed that parents' attendance at the scheduled meetings was low but did not interfere with being advocates of change. Parents developed materials that included policies and procedures, job descriptions, volunteer form, age appropriate activities list, and a program brochure that could be replicated for conducting an adolescent after-school program. Parent involvement is critical in developing an after-school program but without communication and commitment from school personnel, the program could not be successful.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Description of community

The community is a metropolitan-rural area located in the middle of a southeastern state and covers 21.6 square miles of a 666 square mile county. Once a solely agricultural economy, the community is beginning to shift from an agricultural base economy to an industrial base economy. For the diversified population of 42,000, one-third of the labor force is employed in manufacturing, primarily at a chicken processing plant, a printing company, or an automobile brake manufacturer. A military base, which comprises 25.4% of the population, is one of the Air Forces' leading headquarters. The military personnel and their families contribute much to the community by taking an active role in the community organizations, churches, and schools and by being part of its history. The largest city in the community has a racial composition of 60% African-American, 38% Caucasian, 1.0% Hispanic, and 1.0% Asian or Pacific Islander.

Writer's Work Setting

Although the city and county demographics reveal problems that plague the community, such as juvenile crime, teen truancy, illiteracy, and poverty, the educational opportunities are numerous for all of the residents. Three post-secondary education institutions and a family literacy center offer the community the opportunity to increase job skills or obtain further education, such as associate

degrees in art and sciences, degrees in early childhood and elementary education, 5 diploma programs, and 47 certificate programs.

Since 1994, the community has taken notice of the poverty, the illiteracy, the juvenile crime, and the truancy and idleness that have prevailed among children eighteen years and younger. The community viewed the school district as the agency responsible in changing these conditions. However, the school district that houses the largest high school in the state, two middle schools and seven elementary schools was not providing the kind of education that garnished positive adolescent behaviors. Mandated by the state education board and by the request of the community, the school district, in collaboration with the community, crafted a vision for the future. The vision was to guarantee a high quality education to every child and to provide challenging, innovative learning experiences in a safe, supportive and culturally diverse environment. The district concentrated on the instruction by increasing the accelerated, college-bound programs. As a result, there were a number of middle school students who received academic recognition for mathematics and science. However, the lack of funding prevented the athletic programs and recreational programs to be expanded. The middle school after-hour activities were limited to seventh and eighth grade students. Sixth grade students had academic honor society activities offered after school, but there were no

adult-supervised athletic or recreational programs offered.

Through supplementary funding and with the assistance of the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, programs were established for the middle school located in the impoverished section of the city rather than the targeted middle school. The targeted middle school was located in the affluent western part of the city as compared to the other school located in the southeastern area and had a higher percentage of Caucasian students than the city's racial composition.

Located in close proximity to two colleges, a shopping center and the YMCA, the targeted middle school enrolled 917 students; 276 were in sixth grade, 327 in seventh, and 209 in eighth grade. Although the total city-school population (L. Atkins, a personal communication, May 22, 1998) had 65% of students on free or reduced lunch, the targeted school had 56%.

In 1997 a violent crime occurred after the school hours that caused the community to question the school's responsibilities for unsupervised adolescents. The community recognized that the 12.3% of teenagers not attending school or working (Kids Count, 1997), and the juvenile crimes committed were not unique to the impoverished southeastern part of the city; teen idleness and juvenile crimes were in the targeted area. Community, parents, and schools faced the challenge of unsupervised adolescents during after-school hours.

Writer's Role

During the implementation of the practicum the writer was employed with the school district as an administrator of early childhood and extended care programs. Since 1992 the writer had been responsible for organizing, administrating, and managing all the after-school programs for preschool through fifth grade. The district employed over 1,900 employees with 33 reporting directly to the writer in the elementary after-school programs. There were no after-school programs beyond the fifth grade. The writer was directly responsible for the day-to-day operation of after-school childcare program with supervision and approval from the school principals and two superintendents. The supervisors evaluated the writer on an annual basis.

The writer was responsible for securing funding for all supplies, materials, furnishings, administrative costs and salaries. Based on these expenditures the writer determined parents' weekly fees and requested state childcare reimbursement. Parents' fees and state subsidies supported salaries, fringes, supplies, food, and office support.

Each elementary after-school program was certified as a state licensed day care center and employed teachers who were responsible for providing age appropriate activities in an adult-supervised environment. The writer was responsible for ensuring that all centers were in

compliance with local and state regulations, including the required annual 15 training hours of childcare. Because there were no after-school programs in the targeted middle school, the writer's responsibility to that school was to provide parent resources to staff and parents.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that the parents in one middle school did not provide supervision and age appropriate activities to their young adolescents during the after-school hours.

Problem Description

The adolescents in the targeted middle school were without adult supervision and without opportunity to participate in age appropriate activities during the after-school hours. Lefstein and Lipsitz (1995) defined age appropriate activities as activities that meet the adolescents' developmental needs, such as self-exploration, positive interactions with adults and peers, meaningful participation, physical activity, opportunities for competency and achievement, and structure with clear limits in a diversified environment.

Agencies and projects, such as the Teen Pregnancy Council, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, chamber of commerce, and regional medical center had addressed the problem of unsupervised adolescents but parents in the targeted area had not. Through the funding for programs and adolescent outreach initiatives the community agencies were able to solve the problem in the southeastern section of the community but not in the targeted area.

Since 1994, the Teen Pregnancy Council, Interagency Council, and District Instructional Committee discussed

issues that beleagued the community. Because research (Miller and Marx, 1990) stated that the nonsupervision of adolescents leads to antisocial behaviors, such as juvenile crime, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and teen idleness, programs were established that presented information about the effects of the antisocial behavior. Law enforcement officials and community agency members visited the schools and spoke of activities that promoted pro-social acts, such as cooperation, understanding, and improving community skills.

In 1997, after the violent crime by five adolescents who raped and murdered two elderly women during after school hours (Barnard, 1998), community members wanted to see a reduction of unsupervised adolescents. Community focus groups met and were able to offer programs such as pregnancy prevention programs and parenting classes. No program provided supervision for adolescents during the after-school hours. In 1998 the chamber of commerce believed that the nonsupervision of adolescents was linked to the lack of parenting skills. Consequently, the chamber dedicated its efforts to parenting and language readiness for preschools. Parenting classes were offered throughout the community. The classes enhanced parent enthusiasm, encouraged positive parenting behaviors, but the classes did not increase the parent supervision of the adolescents.

A regional medical center created the Healthy Start Project, which conducted a community needs assessment.

Results of the assessment led to available funding in 1998 for programs that provided adult supervision for adolescents while meeting the adolescents' developmental needs. Because the southeastern part of the city was considered impoverished, the funding was allocated to the Boys and Girls Club. The club expanded the adolescent after-school program by increasing recreational and physical activities and by developing a leadership institute for adolescents. No funds were allotted to the targeted area and the problem continued.

Problem Documentation

The problem of parents not providing supervision and age appropriate activities for their adolescents during the after-school hours was evident by a parent interest survey, the school district's Parent Forum, and documented telephones calls to the parents. A memorandum from the middle school principal provided evidence that parents had not participated in developing, planning, or establishing an after-school program.

In 1997, a parent (M. Atkison, a personal communication, March 29, 1998) informed the school district of the nonsupervision of adolescents during the after-school hours and the antisocial behaviors as a result of the nonsupervision. With the approval of the school district, the parent developed a parent interest survey to determine if nonsupervision was a problem in the targeted area. The survey was distributed to parents of children

who were transitioning to middle school the following school year.

The parent interest survey indicated that 53 of 67 parents stated that during after-school hours their adolescents were without adult supervision. While at home alone the adolescents were engaged in completing homework, watching television, listening to music, browsing on the Internet, or playing video games.

A Parent Forum, a committee developed in 1991 by the school board of trustees and comprised of parents and the superintendent of the school district, meet three times a year to address concerns and issues. At one of the forum's annual meetings two of the seven members stated that adolescents in the targeted middle school were unsupervised during the after-school hours and no adult-supervised programs were available.

In August 1998, the principal (W.Coon, a personal communication, August 26, 1998) wanted to determine if a problem of unsupervised adolescents during the after-school hours warranted attention. During the middle school orientation, parents toured the campus, discussed school regulations, and learned about the activities available for their children. The principal made forms available to parents who were interested in supervision for their adolescents. Fifteen parents completed and left forms with the secretary who sent them to the writer. Twelve of the fifteen parents confirmed that their adolescents were home

alone and engaged in unproductive activities, such as watching 'too much' television or playing video games. The parents considered the activities to be unproductive as compared to adult-supervised activities, such as homework, sports, or learning a skill. A memorandum from the middle school principal corroborated that middle school parents had not taken a leadership role in developing or planning an adult-supervised after-school program.

Causative Analysis

There were many reasons underlying the problem of unsupervised adolescents, but the four prominent causes in the targeted area were found outside the parameters of the school. The causes were lack of parent involvement, increased number of parents employed, absence of an adult-supervised program in the targeted area, and cost of care.

Berk (1999) and Bogenschneider (1997) reported that parent involvement was vital for assisting adolescents in becoming responsible individuals. Extensive research (Jesse, 1998) concluded that when parents were involved with their adolescents school activities, the adolescents performed better in academics and had higher self-esteem. Research (Berk) reported that adolescents experienced physical, social, and emotional changes when they entered middle school. Through a balance of parent involvement and allowing for self-exploration, parents nurtured their adolescents' developmental changes. A study examining the relationship between school achievement and parent

involvement (Muller, 1997) determined that when parents were involved with adolescents' after-school time, the adolescents achieved higher scores in school. "Research consistently reveals that parental warmth and acceptance combined with firm (but not overly restrictive) monitoring of teenagers' activities is related to many aspects of competence" (Berk, p. 619). Although there were many reasons for why parents did not become involved in their adolescents' activities, it remained that parent involvement decreased when the child entered middle school. Based on the middle school Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meeting attendance (W.Coon, a personal communication, July 14, 1998), middle school parents did not attend school meetings as often as elementary school parents. A middle school counselor (M. Ranjbarzadeh, a personal communication, August 25, 1998) gave three reasons why parents of middle school students did not become involved:

1. When the family demographics included children attending different schools, parent involvement was usually devoted to the younger children.
2. The transition of elementary school to middle school lent belief that middle school children were adult-like and mature.
3. With the increase of the labor force and the added pressures of society, many families had more demands on their lives.

When parents were not involved in their adolescents'

lives, the adolescents were found to have a lot of discretionary time; the misuse of which led to a variety of social and personal problems.

The second cause for unsupervised adolescents was the increase of mothers working. The Children's Defense Fund (1998) reported 78% of women with children under the age of 13 years worked outside the home. With the current welfare reform laws more mothers are in the labor force. Consequently, children become unsupervised during the time mothers are at work. Placing work requirements on families has caused adolescents to be left alone or caring for their siblings during after-school hours. The welfare laws enacted in August 1996 (Martinez, Dahl, and Minor, 1998) required states to develop a plan that terminated benefits within a 12-month to 60-month period. Welfare reform laws eliminated food stamp benefits for immigrant families and restricted eligibility for cash assistance for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. What did this mean to the targeted area? More families were forced into employment without regard to childcare. A report by the director of the local Department of Social Services (S. Johnson, a personal communication, August 9, 1998) indicated a lower unemployment rate of 4.3% during 1997. With the 574 welfare recipients securing employment, more children were unsupervised and in need of childcare. In 1998 the Department of Social Service subsidy childcare program doubled the number of welfare recipients' children

attending the district's after-school programs, indicating that more mothers were employed. Because of the increase of parents working, the number of children staying home alone before or after school had increased. This unsupervised time lead to unstructured, unproductive activities, which promoted antisocial behavior.

The third cause for unsupervised adolescents was the unavailability of programs in the targeted area. As previously stated, teen programs answered the problem of unsupervised adolescents in the southeastern part of the city but not in the targeted area. In 1994, a teen center, located in the center of the city, was created for the adolescents to meet friends and to participate in activities during after-school hours. Within a year the center was closed because of vandalism and the inability to combine cultures and races. Students began to congregate at the targeted middle school during the after-school hours. Although the school environment provided racial harmony, the school officials saw the potential dangers in the number of unsupervised students staying after school. The targeted middle school requested additional funding from the city and county councils, but to no avail. Further budget restraints added to the increase of unsupervised adolescents. The retrenchment of funding on the local and state levels caused reduction of services at the schools. As a result, some middle school programs were cut. The middle school handbook described limited activities for

seventh and eighth grade students and no programs with adult supervision for sixth grade students. Students were encouraged to attend activities at the YMCA, located within three miles from the school. The YMCA, with three gymnasiums, one weight room, a swimming pool, and a fitness room provided excellent facilities. However, there were no adult-supervised adolescent programs and the annual membership fees ranged from $148 for an individual student-membership to $400 for a family membership. Because there were no adult-supervised after-school programs in the targeted area, the number of unsupervised adolescents increased.

The fourth leading cause for nonsupervision was the high cost of supervision. In the targeted area childcare fees ranged from $50 to $75 a week, totaling $1,900 for the 38-week school year. With these high costs childcare became expensive, especially when the parent made minimum wage or had more than one child. Parents had to make important decisions regarding payment for childcare or using the money for other necessities. At what age can children stay home alone? What are the dangers of staying home alone? These are questions parents had to answer. Added to the high cost of childcare was the fact that the United States government did not recognize the need to supervise children older than 12 years of age. Although the United States Department of Health and Human Services (1997) offered two childcare subsidies for low-income parents working or

attending school, children over the ages of 12 years were not allowed participation in the subsidy program. This indicated that the United States government did not recognize the need for supervision of adolescents.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Review of literature showed evidence that unsupervised adolescents and lack of parent supervision existed in all parts of the United States. During the times when school was not in session, Blacklock (1989) reported that an estimated 5.2 million children were left alone and the number was increasing. This had a profound effect on society and adolescents who were exposed to dangers or potential dangers of their surroundings.

Miller and Marx (1990) reported that the time adolescents spend out of school was crucial to adolescents' social, emotional, and physical development. Lack of adult supervision during after-school hours accelerated the risks faced by youth. Miller and Marx associated self-care with several negative outcomes. Self-care children were more lonely, anxious, headstrong and likely to have peer conflicts, less likely to complete homework, and likely to have poorer social skills. Although experts differed in the number of children who were unsupervised in the United States, the impact of nonsupervision remained the same.

The Child Care Bureau (1998, p.1) stated, "According to the Bureau of the Census, in 1997 there were 38.8 million children between ages 5 and 14 years living in the U. S.

There were approximately 24 million school-age children who had parents in the work force or were pursuing an education [based on 1993 SIPP data from the figures of the Census]." Childcare experts (Avant, 1995; National Institute on Out-of-School Time [NIOST], 1997) believed that this figure was misleading and that the number may be three or four times higher. Although the actual number of unsupervised adolescents was not known, the greatest risk for violence, as victims or felons, was with youth between ages 12 and 17. Early adolescence was considered a turbulent period and a time for social and emotional changes. In a study by Posner and Vandell (1994, p. 447) it was reported that "children who were unsupervised or in informal adult supervised arrangements were reported to be more antisocial than children who returned to home to their mothers after school or attended after-school programs." Miller and Marx (1990) stated that research showed that adolescents who were not under adult supervision and not participating in age appropriate activities were more likely to smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol. Records from a series of conference presentations and group discussions of childcare and unsupervised children (North Carolina University, 1985) revealed that there were growing numbers of unsupervised adolescents. In Los Angeles 7,000 workers were interviewed (North Carolina University). "Of the 7,000 Central City workers at five major work sites, 20% left their children unsupervised of which 76% were 10 to 14 year olds" (North

Carolina University, p. 10). This North Carolina study cautioned communities to be cognizant of children's emotional and physical safety and personal welfare when unsupervised. Padilla and Landreth (1989) found that seventh and eighth grade students who were unsupervised did not have the opportunity to have positive interactions with their peers or adults and they did not have the opportunity to participate in structured activities. The results from a study on the risks in self-care (Kraizer, Witte, Fryer, and Miyoshi, 1990) showed that children were vulnerable to the influences of strangers. The study demonstrated that unsupervised children allowed strangers to enter their homes. Researchers had difficulty qualifying the actual numbers of unsupervised children, but studies (Allen, 1991; LaChance, 1988; Seligson, 1997; Seppanen et al., 1993) enumerated two important facts:

1. There were an overwhelming number of unsupervised children in the United States.
2. Unsupervised children, especially adolescents, were vulnerable to negative and unlawful behaviors, such as school failure, substance abuse, smoking, and early sexual encounters.

These studies revealed that self-care promoted behaviors that led to antisocial acts. Fox and Newman (1997) further documented results of unsupervision. Fox and Newman's study on the relationship to after-school crime and unsupervised adolescents revealed that the peak hours

for violent juvenile crime were 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and that 57% of the children under 18 years of age were unsupervised.

Other settings of the United States recognized the problem of unsupervised adolescents and the potential problem of unsupervised adolescents during the after school hours. Statistical data in South Carolina (Kids Count, 1997) stated that 12.3% of the adolescents were not working or attending school. In the geographic areas where the numbers were high, vandalism and juvenile crime rates were high. Also, information collected from 24 states captured the dilemma of unsupervised adolescents and the pressure for the communities to provide supervision intensified (Fowler, 1997; Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995). Fowler reported in a 1987 after-school study of childcare that 30% of parents left their middle school children without adult supervision as compared with 76% in a 1996 study. Another study in California (Louv, 1997) showed that the increased number of unsupervised youth was in proportion to the increase in violent crime. Louv (p. 2) reported, "The number of California teens murdered more than doubled during the past decade. Since 1991, California has incarcerated juveniles at a higher rate than any other state, a rate twice the national average." Concern for the high rate of incarcerated juveniles and the projected increase of teen population prompted the city and law enforcement to review the problem. The Fowler study and the

Louv study authenticated the problem of unsupervised adolescents and the potential dangers that could occur.

With the number of unsupervised children in the United States ranging from 1.6 million to 13 million children in self-care and where 40 percent of the children's time was spent in unstructured, unsupervised, and unproductive activities, the national societal phenomenon of unsupervised children reached epidemic proportions (Avant, 1995; Martinez et al., 1998; Seligson, 1997).

In the review of literature the causes of unsupervised adolescents in other parts of the nation showed a close congruency to the causes of the targeted area. Lack of parent involvement, the increased number of mothers working, the unavailability of programs, the cost of childcare, and parents' perception of supervision were factors that contributed to unsupervised adolescents.

Berk (1999) stated that both adolescents and their parents change when children reach the middle school grades. The middle schools were larger, more impersonal, and probably more complex than their elementary schools. "Parent involvement always drops off once kids hit middle and high school" (Decker, 1997, p.3). These changes caused parents to view adolescence as a time for more freedom or a time when communicating was difficult. A review of literature (Bogenschneider, 1997; Jesse, 1998) showed a link between parents' roles in the schools and their children's social and emotional skills. The more parents

were involved in the school, the more the children exhibited higher levels of self-esteem and fewer antisocial behaviors. Further studies (Jesse) suggested that there was a connection between parent involvement and institutional change. School changes (Jesse) that were initiated by parents showed greater long-term effects and success. Based on research reviewed regarding parent involvement and the lack of it, parents involved in the supervision of adolescents monitored their adolescents' behaviors more and offered the adolescents support and guidance.

The second cause that correlated with the targeted area was the increased rate of employment. On October 1, 1996 President Clinton (Martinez et al., 1998) enacted the welfare laws for the purpose of helping families with children into work and out of poverty. As a result of these laws, children became unsupervised while parents were employed. Marx (1989) and Padilla and Landreth (1989) indicated that more women were entering the labor force and more children were left at home without supervision. Marx further indicated that adolescents who were home alone experienced loneliness, stress, and antisocial behaviors, such as experimentation in sexual activity, smoking, and alcohol and drugs. Placing work requirements on families without offering the childcare needed caused an added burden on families, resulting in more children unsupervised while their parents worked or attended school (Child Care

Bureau, 1998).

The Child Care Bureau (1998, p. 1,2) reported that "the annual cost for center-based care ranged from $5,000 to $12,000 for infants and $4,000 to $8,000 for preschoolers." The Child Care Bureau publicized childcare rates in different parts of the nation; in Boston, Massachusetts the average annual cost for childcare was $8,840 as compared to the annual cost of $4,210 in Dallas, Texas. This cost was unaffordable for many families. Avant (1995) stated that the weekly cost for adolescent care ranged from $65 to $125 and that few quality programs were available. With the high cost for before and after school supervision, in 1996 poor families spent a quarter of their annual income on childcare (Martinez et al., 1998).

The third cause for unsupervised adolescents was found to be the unavailability of programs. On December 2, 1997 Richard W. Riley, United States Secretary of Education released $40 million to fund after-school programs, with the majority of the dollars allocated for elementary school programming (United States Department of Education [USDE], 1997). Marx (1989) emphasized that programs should offer extensive services, such as health care, substance abuse prevention, linkage to schools, and transportation. These services were costly and few programs were available for the number of adolescents who were unsupervised. As a result the demand for adolescent care remained.

Research studies (Marx, 1989) indicated that parent

perception was a leading cause for nonsupervision. In a Chapel Hill study, Marx reported that 90% of the parents felt that children ages 9 to 11 years required adult supervision and 75% of the parents felt that children 12 years of age needed adult supervision. Subsequent findings (Marx) revealed that parents viewed supervising adolescents, ages 12 to 15 years, less important. Sex and race appeared to play a role in parents' perception for supervision. Fifty percent of the parents indicated that girls by the age of 14 years did not require any supervision and boys by the age of 13 and a half years did not require supervision (Marx). A final point in the research was that black parents were more likely to favor adult supervision for their children (Marx). These findings might answer why parents were not as involved with adolescent care, why there were few programs, and why the parents were not willing to pay the high costs of the care.

The review of literature indicated the causes of the targeted area were consistent with those in all locations of the United States. Lack of parent involvement, increased numbers in the labor force, unavailability of quality programs, and the cost of care were found to be reasons for adolescents not being supervised. Impacts of unsupervised adolescents were also congruent. Unsupervised adolescents were in danger or potential danger to the risks of society (Allen, 1991; Avant, 1995, Miller and Marx, 1990).

The scope of literature review was limited to specific topics that the writer thought were most significant in finding evidence, and causes to the problems of parents not providing supervision to their adolescents. Descriptors of "latchkey" children, childcare, and unsupervised adolescents' provided evidence that the number of unsupervised adolescents was underestimated and the true number has become a problem that is a societal trend. Although the same descriptors yielded data regarding the causes of unsupervised adolescents, the specific topics of adolescents' after-school programs, middle school students, and parent involvement presented causes for the nonsupervision of adolescents during after-school hours.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The purpose of this practicum was to have parents develop an after-school program for unsupervised adolescents. The goal was to have parents develop an adult-supervised after-school program with age appropriate activities for adolescents. The expectations were to involve the parents in formulating the written policies and procedures for an adult-supervised after-school program. After the parents planned and developed the policies and procedures, the parents were to screen potential applicants and to recommend adult supervisors and develop age appropriate activities for the adult-supervised after-school program for adolescents.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. Official attendance records of six scheduled meetings during an eight-week period will indicate 8 of 53 parents will participate in at least four meetings to formulate the written policies and procedures for an adolescent after-school program.
2. Committee meeting minutes will show that during a twelve-week period 4 of 8 parents will be involved in the decision-making process by screening potential applicants' personnel files and recommend selection

of the adult supervisor for an adolescent after-school program.

3. After-school activity forms will show that over a twelve-week period, 4 of 8 parents will acknowledge development of four age appropriate, productive activities for an adolescent after-school program.

Measurement of Outcomes

The writer measured each projected outcome by comparing the prescribed number of parents involved, the activities to the actual number of parents involved and the activities completed. Attention was focused not in the details of implementation or on the outcomes fostered but rather on documenting major patterns of activities and on examining the process of the parents' involvement. Outcome one stated eight parents would attend four of the scheduled six meetings during an eight-week period. It was measured by counting the number of parents who attended the six scheduled meetings. At each meeting the parents signed an attendance sheet which was documented in the meeting minutes. Acceptable level of success was having at least eight parents attending four meetings during the prescribed time. The completed program policies and procedures, job description, and list of activities were further evidence of parent involvement in the planning of the after-school program.

Outcome Two stated that during a twelve-week period, four of eight parents would screen and recommend

selection of potential adult supervisors for an adolescent after-school program. Comparing the prescribed number of parents to the actual number who screened and recommended adult supervisors indicated success of the outcome. The writer counted the number of parents participating in the process and the number of times the parents commented on the selection process of adult supervision for the after-school program. Through compiling the information from the meeting minutes, the writer determined success of the outcome by showing that at least four parents screened and recommended staff selection.

Outcome Three stated that during a twelve-week period four parents would acknowledge development of four age-appropriate, productive activities for an adolescent after-school program. Using after-school activity forms, the writer counted the number of parents who developed age-appropriate activities for the after-school program. Age-appropriate activities were determined according to Lefstein and Lipsitz's (1995) definition in Chapter Two. The writer determined success of the outcome by showing that at least four parents developed a list of four adolescent age appropriate activities during the prescribed time.

The parents' attendance of the scheduled meetings reflected quantitative measurements of Outcome One, but the description of the meeting minutes and the materials produced determined the accomplishments of the practicum

and the importance of involving parents in school decision-making.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that adolescents in the targeted middle school were unsupervised during the after-school hours. Based on the evidence that adults did not supervise adolescents in the targeted area during the after-school hours and that there were no age appropriate productive activities offered to the adolescents, the writer reviewed the literature for solutions.

Descriptors of unsupervised children, after-school programs for adolescents, self-care for adolescents, parent involvement, and latchkey children generated ideas and strategies that were found successful in reducing the nonsupervision of young adolescents in the middle school.

Communities that experienced the difficulties of unsupervised adolescents similar to those in the targeted area offered strategies with different priorities and goals. Lefstein and Lipsitz (1995) identified 24 successful supervised programs. All of the 24 provided adult supervision, but the four that were selected for study concentrated on the developmental needs of the adolescents. Detours, a program in Boston, Massachusetts (Lefstein and Lipsitz) offered independent and exploration activities using the city transportation system. Based on the premise that unsupervised adolescents needed freedom to explore but should not be left alone, the community offered city tours

by adult supervisors. The tours answered the adolescents' need for exploration while maintaining clear, set limits. The program was successful and over 900 members participated. Unfortunately, because of budget restraint, it was discontinued in June 1986. In a Kansas community citizens proclaimed (Lefstein and Lipsitz, p.42),"While parents in other communities wring their hands and decry the lack of opportunity for their children in after-school hours, parents in Derby have the good fortune to watch their children choose among a plethora of activities." In an effort to give unsupervised adolescents after-school activities, the community education program combined forces with adult education, businesses, and the local school system and established a network of enrichment programs. Building on what the community offered and funds received from mill levy, private foundations, and participant fees, Derby created an integrated community program with activities for all ages. The comprehensive array of age appropriate activities met the developmental needs of the adolescents while keeping them in a safe environment. From this program the participants became skillful and responsible. In fact, some of the teens became leaders and instructors for younger students. Being unsupervised is not predisposed to one group of adolescents. In Great Neck, New York to accommodate the well-to-do adolescent population (Lefstein and Lipsitz), a library program was established. Funds from local taxation paid the library

part-time staff to provide free homework assistance and tutoring to adolescents. In addition to the supervision provided, the library staff supported individual growth through interpersonal experiences and workshops. The program expanded to include a heterogeneous mix of students when bus services were provided. The result from this program proved that young teens from different backgrounds learned and played together. For approximately 300 adolescents the costs were between $70,000-80,000 annually.

Establishing a licensed after-school day care at a Memphis housing development allowed the adolescents to be in a familiar environment without the need for transportation (Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995). The purpose of the Memphis program was to provide academic, recreational and social service activities. As a licensed day care, the program received funding though Title XX funds and allowed children to participate at a nominal cost. The outcomes for this impoverished population included higher school grades, reduction of juvenile crime and reduction of teen pregnancy (Lefstein and Lipsitz).

In all the research a reoccurring theme was found. Programs were developed with a purpose, and the purpose was defined in terms of measurable goals. Thus, for example, one program was designed to focus on adult supervision; another had the primary goal to improve homework grades. Federally supported after-school programs (USDE, 1997; Institute for Educational Leadership, 1998) were designed

to provide high quality childcare for students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Through internal and external federal evaluations these programs ensured high quality, age appropriate practices.

Understanding the importance of adult supervision and individual care, Fox and Newman (1997) reported that the mentoring programs at the Big Brothers/Big Sisters projects and the Boys and Girls Club program showed positive results. Through a mentoring program, adolescents were given individual emotional support. While the adolescents participated in these programs, there was less drug and alcohol use and the juvenile crime rate in the area was curtailed. A nationally recognized volunteer mentoring program paired adolescents who were deficient in reading with community members (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1998). In the mentoring programs studied, students were given individual attention in a nurturing, caring environment and grades improved (Fox and Newman; Institute for Educational Leadership). Because of volunteers, the cost of the programs was reduced. In a small southern city, a similar form of mentoring was proposed. Through a "bootcamp" approach adolescents were confined in a structured setting; the program was proposed for repeated juvenile offenders for the purpose of reducing juvenile crime (Barnard, 1998; Lynch 1997).

A research project (Rutherford and Billig, 1995) focusing on family and community involvement in the middle

grades, examined nine sites and synthesized findings into the effects of parent involvement in school and family partnerships. The one overwhelming impact was that shared decision making fostered school change and contributed to student success. A national study of before and after school programs (Seppanen et. al, 1993) showed that the role of parents was crucial to the success of after-school programs. In the study of 1,300 child care programs 11% required parent involvement, 62% reported involvement in planning or evaluation, and 33% served in an advisory capacity. Jesse (1998) reported that extensive literature review led to the belief that parents who were involved in the school's decision-making process effected positive changes in the school. In addition, Marx (1989) supported the theory that parents who participated in their adolescents' school in a leadership role developed positive attitudes toward the school, helped solidify community support for school programs, and became more involved in community affairs. Extensive evidence suggested that parent involvement had a direct relationship to the child's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Bogenschneider, 1997; Jesse, 1998). Adolescent programs that accentuated strong community partnerships were found in a large metropolitan community in California and a small suburban area in New England. In a collaborative effort the school, city recreational agencies, local merchants, coffee houses, YMCA, and the police department featured

numerous activities such as, martial arts, teen fitness, roller hockey, government model legislature program, homework assistance, arts and crafts, games, and sports (Mitchell, 1998). Utilizing community volunteers (Greaser, 1995), a middle school after-school program offered 19 different activities in two-class sessions per week over a 10-week period. Volunteers who were parents, teachers, high school students and community members provided instruction and support. Collaboration with a recreational center resulted in funding for transportation, making the programs more accessible for the adolescents. The ideas for this program were innovative and produced a list of excellent age appropriate activities with the emphasis on community volunteerism.

Although unsupervised adolescents during after-school hours may function very well, studies indicated that there were potential negative effects with self-care (North Carolina University, 1985.) Unsupervised children were in danger of engaging in delinquent behaviors or becoming victims of crime (Marx, 1989). A Wisconsin community (Blacklock, 1989) with a self-care program for parents and children provided classroom instruction and parent workshops. Classroom instruction was comprised of four lessons, including parent/child workbook and home videotapes that supplemented the lessons. Parent workshops focused on awareness of risks and societal trends dealing with unsupervised children. Self-care packets, survival

skill curriculum, and computer and telephone services linked with self-care allowed 181 families to participate. Evaluation of the program indicated that approximately 80 percent of the parents felt that their children were more prepared for self-care.

In order to develop a sound solution, the writer reflected on the review of literature then combined the ideas that were conducive to the targeted area. Also, the writer considered the work setting, the power base for making change, the time and materials required for success, the stakeholders of the problem, and the problem itself.

Certain topics were repeated which generated many solutions and ideas for solving the problem. The Center for Early Adolescence (Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995) made a concerted effort to address programs that met children's developmental needs. With qualified, caring supervision age appropriate activities were provided in a manner that met the adolescents' needs. Throughout the country, programs offered both structured activities and non-structured activities. For example, the program in Massachusetts (Lefstein and Lipsitz) taught transportation safety, while the students explored the city under the supervision of a guide. Some programs (Fox and Newman, 1997; Miller and Marx, 1990; Mitchell, 1998) concentrated on reducing juvenile crime or focused on academics. Each received high approvals by parents and community. Some after-school programs discovered that students were unable

to participate without transportation; therefore, transportation was provided through innovative means (Greaser, 1995; Lefstein and Lipsitz). Location sites became important issues (Mitchell); some used school facilities and others offered services in libraries, old city buildings, or housing developments. The important factors in deciding location were to find a facility that offered the most resources, least cost, and met parents' needs.

From the literature review and the ideas that were generated, certain criteria needed to be addressed. The criteria that were essential for the after-school program for unsupervised adolescents in the targeted school were adult supervision with structure and clear limits for the adolescents, age appropriate productive activities that met the adolescents' needs, safe and accessible facilities, and committed parents who would provide the leadership in the program.

A number of ideas were derived from the studies but not all of the strategies were applicable to the targeted setting. Lefstein and Lipsitz (1995) and other literature (Blacklock, 1989; Mitchell, 1998) emphasized that solutions must be guided by the problem. To solve the problem, the needs of the community and the purpose for solving the problem were analyzed. The paramount purpose for the Massachusetts program was meeting developmental needs by offering transportation and informal supervision.

Transportation enhanced the participation in the program and increased the students participating in activities. However, in the targeted setting transportation was not a leading issue. Based on the evidence and concerns of the parents and community, supervision from a nurturing, caring adult who understands adolescents and meets their needs would solve the problem of unsupervised adolescents and would be the ultimate goal. Effective leadership was mentioned throughout the literature (Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995; Jesse, 1998, Marx, 1989; Rutherford and Billig, 1995) and community mentors, volunteers, and parents provided the balance of responsiveness and supervision that was needed in adolescent programs. In all the review, well-trained staff, who are nurturing and caring to the needs of adolescents, provided the stability for the program. Parents, schools staff, or community members took active roles in developing, planning, and sponsoring programs. Parents involved in the decision-making process, not only contributed to their adolescents' personal growth and development, but sustained longevity. Committed volunteers, college students, professional teachers, or paid caregivers (Miller and Marx, 1990; North Carolina University, 1985) gave the supervised children positive role models, offering needed support and sometimes criticism. As principal stakeholders in the problem of unsupervised adolescents, the parents' involvement in this practicum was crucial to the success of the program. The parents acted as the

leaders and decision-makers for the program.

Literature of after-school programs (Miller and Marx, 1990; North Carolina University, 1985; Seppanen, et al, 1993) provided a variety of activities such as homework assistance, social activities, and constructive growth experiences. All were balanced to promote choice, group interaction, and individualism with the ultimate goal of supervision for children.

Although the goals of the after-school program varied, each program had to address the issue of funding. The literature stated that grants, foundations, local taxation, or parent fees (Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995; (USDE, 1997; USDE, 1998; USDHH, 1997) were sources of funding for some of the programs. However, the parents leadership roles determined if how funding would be obtained. In the targeted area funding could not be allotted through taxation; the city and county councils' negative view of the alternative schools hindered any community funding opportunity. Federal support was limited to subsidies for youth younger than thirteen years of age (Martinez, et al, 1998; USDHH). However, the grants offered through the Secretary of Education's office, such as the 21st Century Homework grant (USDE, 1997) allowed homework centers for adolescents and defrayed some program costs.

Mentoring programs (Fox and Newman, 1997; USDE, 1998) answered the restraints of funding, but created a problem of continuity. A mentoring program requires careful

planning and selection of mentors; it requires matching the mentors' scheduling times with those of the participants. The targeted community had limited volunteerism and finding mentors would create a challenge during the critical hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. With three colleges and an Air Force Base located in the targeted area, mentoring could be a possibility for staff. However, mentoring could not replace the permanent staff who would provide continual care and services. The "bootcamp" approach (Barnard, 1998) was not considered because it did not fit the characteristics of the adolescents in the targeted area.

Because the self-care Wisconsin model (Blacklock, 1989) did not provide supervision, it was not appealing to the targeted parents. This model presented instruction in preparing for self-care to parents and children and could become part of the resources in the program.

Descriptions of Selected Solutions

After reviewing the pertinent literature, many ideas were generated but one overarching lesson in the literature served as both a warning and a challenge. No one solution could be replicated; the selected solution for the targeted area had to be unique and fit the special blend of evidence, causes, and needs that were found. Parents were the stakeholders in the problem and played a key role in planning and creating a supervised after-school program. Based on parents' concerns and the ideas generated from the literature, the three factors in selecting the solution

were adult supervision, structure, and adolescents' needs. Some programs were created because the community wanted to provide a place for adolescents to interact with peers; others came from the desire to reduce juvenile crime; and many were established to provide supervision. Because of the parents' concerns for nonsupervision the ultimate goal for the targeted area was to provide adult supervision for adolescents during the after-school hours. Therefore, parents were directly involved in developing the guidelines, policies, funding and staffing resulting in implementation of an adult-supervised environment.

The second factor for consideration in selecting the solution was structure. Policies and procedures, facilities, and collaboration encompassed structure in most of the programs studied. Through the leadership roles, parents collaborated with schools and community in providing resources, activities, funding, and selecting qualified adult supervision for the program. The policies and procedures developed by the parents, set the foundation for the program and provided the guidelines for a quality program. From the review of literature the writer determined that community collaboration was required in establishing an effective and efficient after-school program. Funding, site locations, sponsorships, and volunteers were all part of the structure of the after-school program. Community resources and parent and community involvement fostered change and relationships

were found to contribute to success (Rutherford and Billig, 1995).

The third and critical factor in solving the problem of unsupervised adolescents was to understand the adolescents' needs. Purposeful structured age appropriate activities allowed adolescents to have meaningful participation. Through the process of selecting qualified staff the parents would ensure that the key elements for addressing adolescents' developmental needs would be met. Through developing age appropriate activities the parent would become sensitive and supportive of their adolescents.

The writer understood that the role of the parent would be the first step in finding the solution to the unsupervised adolescents. After the parents developed and created an adolescent after-school program, the school officials would be responsible to implement it. The problem of unsupervised adolescents could not be solved until the after-school program was implemented. With a program, the unsupervised adolescents would be supervised and be active participants in age appropriate activities.

Report of Actions Taken

The writer took a facilitator's role during the planning and creating stages of the practicum. Because the parents were directly involved in developing the after-school program, the writer performed the tasks of an ombudsman. During the implementation schedule the writer was responsible for educating the parents in how to develop

an after-school program. Upon approval for implementation of the practicum, the writer faced two barriers. Prior to the implementation parents were eager to develop a program but as the months elapsed the parents found other interests and alternatives for having their adolescents supervised. Secondly, when the school obtained a Department of Education 21st Century Homework Grant, the principal became reluctant in allowing parents in developing the program. The goals of the grant were to improve academic performance, to increase parents' awareness of health, nutrition, and disease prevention activities, and to access telecommunications and technology. The grant met the strategic plans for the middle school; therefore, the principal believed another program was not needed. The writer pointed out to him that the grant was written to service economically deprived and educationally disadvantaged inner city youth and their families; it did not reflect any programming for other students. The principal was reminded of that terrible day on April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Colorado when Americans were alerted that all children were at-risk and required some supervision. With that reminder the principal agreed that an after-school program was needed for the diverse population of middle school students. Ensuring that parents complied with the district's board policy and state childcare regulations, the superintendent agreed to allow parents to develop a program that would meet parents'

needs. The writer met with the Parent Forum representative and together composed a letter. The writer and parent requested principals of three elementary schools to distribute the letter to all parents of children in the fourth and fifth grades in the targeted area. The letter described the intent of the practicum and requested parent participation in developing a program. Fifteen parents and one middle school teacher responded positively to the first parent meeting. The writer purchased fifteen notebooks and prepared materials for the meeting; ten parents attended.

At the first meeting the writer introduced the purpose, agenda, and timetable of the practicum. After introductions the parents selected a chairperson to act as a facilitator for all the meetings and to represent the group with school officials. At this crucial meeting, the parents voiced two concerns. The parents observed the middle school's lack of after-school activities and the need for adult guidance during the after-school hours. There was a lively discussion and parents recognized the urgency of a program; the parents wanted school officials to attend the meetings and validate the process. The writer informed the parents that a middle school teacher expressed an interest in developing a pilot after-school program. Parents viewed the teacher's project as a means of determining successful elements of an after-school program. The teacher offered a variety of after-school activities to ten adolescents, but after six weeks the project was

terminated. Participation was low and parents voiced dissatisfaction in the program's unstructured environment. This confirmed the parents' convictions that the adolescent after-school program needed structure and a clear set of limits. During the first few weeks of the practicum the parents expressed a feeling of acceptance and validation. However, this eventually changed when the parents realized that the school officials could not attend or commit to the practicum. Although at each meeting refreshments were served and children were encouraged to attend, attendance remained low until the last meeting. One barrier was that working schedules limited the amounts of free time. Other barriers included parents not having cars and parents being too involved with leisure activities. After a parent suggested that interested parents could communicate through Internet, a listserve was set up. The listserve became a useful vehicle for parents to receive drafts and information regarding the after-school program; communication lines were expanded. With this process four parents were added to the parent group. However, incongruent interaction between the school officials and parents was evident. The writer and chairperson tried to meet with the superintendent and school board with no success. School officials were involved with an internal budget crisis and the transition of a new superintendent of schools. Attendance continued to plummet but four parents spent countless hours during and after the meetings

developing the necessary forms and policies. Because of the limited number of parents the practicum format was altered. Together the parents drafted and finalized the philosophy, mission, objectives, and rules and policies of the after-school program. The final philosophy emphasized the need to provide an after school supervised program in a fun, challenging, and supportive environment through a variety of activities. The parents accentuated strong, interpersonal communication, and organizational skills. The mission complimented the philosophy by ensuring that the staff would provide opportunities for students to appreciate individual needs, differences, and diversity and respect for and enjoyment of others. Staff would model and display personal respect, individuality, positive support, and encourage students to participate in age-appropriate activities. In writing the objectives, the parents were influenced by studies on successful after-school programs (Lefstein and Lipsitz, 1995; Seppanen et al., 1997). The seven objectives chosen included:

1. To make available responsible and caring adults who offer support and guidance
2. To foster the self-worth of each student by instilling an age-appropriate sense of independence to help them resist anti-social behavior
3. To develop personal and interpersonal social skills, and to promote appreciation of cultural diversity
4. To reinforce learning by integrating educational

strategies that promote school success

5. To provide enrichment activities and to spark students' curiosity and adventure
6. To provide recreation and physical activities that allow adolescents to channel their energy constructively
7. To provide community awareness through life experiences

Parents wanted the rules and policy information to reflect strict disciplinary codes and set limits for payment and participation. Completing the policies gave the parents a renewed feeling of excitement and they expressed their appreciation to the writer.

With the inability to maintain contact with the school officials and to obtain approval for implementation, the parents decided not to screen and select potential staff. Therefore, Outcome Two was adjusted. Parents decided that the writer would interview and select the adult supervisor. Parents developed a list of qualifications that would be used in hiring the supervisor. This list included having a valid driver's license, ability to assist or guide adolescents in academic activities, ability to demonstrate leadership qualities, and having a high school diploma or higher. Other criteria were having strong interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills, respect for and enjoyment of children, appreciation of children's individual needs, punctuality, reliability, patience, and

flexibility. At midpoint of the practicum the parents requested that their adolescents attend the last three meetings to assist with program development. It was concluded that the adolescents would have keener insight on adolescents' needs and fun activities.

Using age appropriate activity resource books and Internet links to commercial activity kits, the writer and chairperson presented a list and descriptions of twenty activities that were suitable for adolescents. These activities were based on Lefstein and Lipstiz's (1995) definition of age appropriateness. To assist in building a list of activities, the writer presented child development milestones for children ages ten to thirteen years. Parents and students brainstormed on activities that would enhance the program. During the discussion of activities, parents and adolescents emphasized a need for at least an hour of homework monitoring and assistance. After reviewing the twenty activities that were compiled by the chairperson and writer, an activity list form was distributed. Working in pairs, five groups developed a list of activities including board games, mask making, creative cooking, papermaking items, gift making, tennis, volleyball, computers at the local college, wacky inventions, and nature treasures. After a brainstorming session for the name that would depict a spirit of adventure in an educational setting, the group selected Extended School Challenges And Partner Education (ESCAPE). The writer

indicated that parent fees would be needed to fund the program. Budget was discussed at the fifth meeting and a weekly fee of $35 was established. Because the district discouraged community sponsorships of businesses and agencies, the parents looked for other means to defray costs. Parents recognized that a 21st Century Homework grant could assist financially with the maintenance of the facility. With both programs being housed in the same school custodial staff and cost of utilities would be able to be combined. The parents devised a volunteer form explaining the program and asking for volunteers. The parents circulated these forms to various clubs and churches hoping that individuals would donate time and talents to the program.

At the final meeting the school district information specialist attended and supported the parents' efforts. However, the specialist stated that a feature story could not be submitted to the newspaper until program implementation. The ten parents who attended the last meeting demonstrated a renewed faith in the school district. Parents indicated a sense of empowerment in the decision-making of the school and wanted to continue to be change agents. After the discussion the parents, adolescents, and information specialist celebrated with refreshments and photographs.

Following the meeting two parents and three adolescents printed and distributed five hundred program brochures

throughout the elementary schools. Meetings were held with the principal and superintendent to gain support and to select a facility that would be appropriate for the program. Because the principal was not in favor of having the program in the main building, the chairperson and principal selected a large portable building located near the track field. The building provided ample space and easy access for parents.

The parent questionnaire was eliminated from the evaluation of the practicum because it served no purpose; none of the outcomes required the questionnaire as an evaluation tool. The chairperson and writer reviewed the policies and procedures, job descriptions, activity lists, volunteer form, tri-fold parent brochure, and budget for errors. A copy of each was sent to each active participant. The chairperson and writer compiled the attendance sheets and the meeting minutes for measurable information for outcome one and two. The activity lists were compiled in measuring outcome three.

Because of numerous commitments, the superintendent's retirement, and the internal budget crisis, the chairperson and writer were unable to report and present a power-point overview. Consequently, the implementation of the adolescent after-school program was delayed. Without the school board approval and support, the after-school program did not become a realization and the program was not featured in the local newspaper.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem for this practicum was that the parents in one middle school did not provide supervision and age appropriate activities to their young adolescents during the after-school hours. The goal was to have parents develop an adult-supervised after-school program with age appropriate activities for adolescents. The expectations were to involve the parents in formulating the written policies and procedures, to screen potential applicants and recommend adult supervision for the after-school program, and to develop age appropriate activities for the adolescents. The expected outcomes for the practicum were as follows:

1. Official attendance records of six scheduled meetings during an eight-week period will indicate 8 of 53 parents will participate in at least four meetings to formulate the written policies and procedures for an adolescent after-school program.

This outcome was not met. By counting the number of parents who attended at least four of the six meetings, it was determined that two meetings reflected attendance of eight parents. Table 1 indicates that by including the number of parents who corresponded through e-mail, at least eight parents participated in three meetings. At four of the meetings the parents developed the policies and procedures for the after-school program.

Table 1

Attendance for Scheduled Meetings

	Meetings Held					
Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
Parents	10	4	4	3	2	10
Adolescents	0	0	0	2	1	6
E-mail	0	0	4	2	2	0
Other (school district information specialist)	0	0	0	0	0	1

2. Committee meeting minutes will show that during a twelve-week period 4 of 8 parents will be involved in the decision-making process by screening potential applicants' personnel files and recommend selection of the adult supervisor for an adolescent after-school program.

This outcome was not met. In four of six meetings, at least four parents were in attendance. The meeting minutes indicated that tney were involved in the decision-making process but they did not screen potential applicants and select the adult supervisor for the program. The meeting minutes revealed that the parents adjusted the process to have the writer interview and select the supervisor in accordance to description for qualified staff.

3. After-school activity forms will show that over a twelve-week period, 4 of 8 parents will acknowledge development of four age appropriate, productive activities for an adolescent after-school program.

This outcome was met. The writer counted the number of parents who developed activity lists (Appendix B) and counted the number of age appropriate activities. Five parents created and described 19 age appropriate, productive activities for adolescents (Appendix C).

Discussion

The writer began the practicum implementation with high expectations, great excitement, and confidence that all outcomes could be achieved. The writer felt strongly that the results would be positive and that other community members, parents or educators who were interested in establishing an after-school program could replicate the practicum. During the mid-point of the practicum the writer became discouraged because of the lack of parent participation and support from the school district. However, with the reassurance from the practicum adviser, the writer acknowledged that the value of the practicum was not dependent upon the number of parents who attended but by their involvement and the quality of materials developed. The parents learned to be flexible in tailoring the after-school program to adolescents' needs. Reviewing literature about successful programs and adolescents' needs, parents learned the basis for developing a program.

Although not statistically measured, the writer observed in conversations and behaviors that parents wanted to be change agents in school decisions and had a genuine interest in after-school activities. After addressing the potential dangers of nonsupervision and the effects of the Columbine High School shooting, the parents' concerns for supervision was reinforced; they became dedicated to establishing supervision and wanted to become partners with the school in finding a solution. Although barriers existed between school and parents, the four parents who attended the meetings enjoyed the information presented on child development, strategies in developing age appropriate after-school activities, and the components required for a successful adolescent program. The solutions in Chapter Four provided a foundation in developing answers to the problem. Parents focused on addressing the developmental needs of the adolescents and guaranteeing adult supervision. Lefstein and Lipstiz (1995) and Miller and Marx (1990) were proponents of programs offering an array of age appropriate activities in an adult-supervised environment. The teacher's after-school program did not offer the adolescents what the parents wanted. The parents observed that the teacher's program lacked structure and clear limits. Parents wanted a program with a supervisor who provided clear expectations and explicit boundaries that defined the program rules and limits. Also, the parents strongly believed that adolescents needed to have

an appropriate role in discussing and forming the rules that they were expected to follow. Parents emphasized the need for structure and to establish a clear set of limits. Parents analyzed the elements of Lefstein and Lipstiz's successful programs then constructed a program with similar characteristics. The parents took pride in providing advice, perspective, and resources in achieving the goal of an after-school program. Although a 21st Century Homework grant was awarded to the middle school, it could not subsidize the parents' after-school program. The homework grant's guidelines did not allow parents to have administrative authority and did not enroll adolescents who were academically good students. However, by combining supply purchases in bulk, and by sharing the same facility and custodial staff, the after-school program and the 21st Century Homework grant could collaborate to reduce operating costs. This collaboration would form a school-parent partnership.

Parents must be "partners" in the schools (Bogenscheider, 1997; Jesse, 1998). This partnership must be more than volunteering; it should include building a parent-school relationship of communication, learning, and mutual support. Schools should accept the advice, strengths, perspective, and resources that parents can provide, allowing parents to become partners in educating children; there should be joint responsibility and support. Today schools not only provide academic instruction but

also provide the accepted behaviors for socialization. Consequently, character education becomes embedded into the curriculum and becomes part of the targeted schools' teachings. Academic education and character education are combined in teaching the whole child; social-emotional, intellectual, and cognitive developmental skills are shared responsibilities of both parents and schools. Schools need to be creative in communicating and empowering parents and varied in educational delivery systems. Parents being involved in an after-school program and adolescents being provided academic and character education activities could strengthen communication and empowerment for school personnel and parents.

During the practicum the parents learned to be creative and utilized Internet in communicating ideas and being involved in developing the program. When attendance became low, the parents adopted the use of Internet; parents responded faster returning e-mail messages rather than telephone calls. Using e-mail could replace teacher notes and conferences for some parents. This avenue would not suit everyone, but it would allow educators to communicate with the parents who are employed and have limited time to spend in conference. As stated in Chapter Two more and more parents have entered the workforce and are not as available for school meetings or conferences. Creative ways to communicate with parents must be devised. Because parent involvement at the middle school is a

difficult balance between adolescents' developing independence and parents' quest to nurture (Berk, 1999), school and home must work together in forming a solid foundation of communication and expectations. In a partnership school personnel and parents must be committed. Four parents were committed to the process of developing an after-school program but the school district was not. On the recommendations of the parents, school officials were invited to attend the meetings, and on only one occasion did an official attend, leaving the parents disappointed. Although the writer recruited 15 parents to participate, the writer was alone in assisting the parents in finding a solution to the problem of nonsupervision. A possible reason for this disassociation was the turmoil and emotional unrest that was caused by the school district internal budget.

The parent involvement in developing a supervised program for adolescents was one step toward the parents' goal of supervision. Without the implementation of the after-school program, the parents' goal could not be realized and the nonsupervision of adolescents continued during the after-school hours. In spite of the fact that no program was implemented and the school district did not support the program development, the parents remained advocates of the middle school.

Parents indicated that developing an after-school program was not an easy task and required much thought.

Meeting the needs of the adolescents with age appropriate activities, providing a safe, fun environment, and having qualified supervision are essential for success. Parents recognized the importance of adolescents' feedback; the adolescents were key stakeholders. Parents had a great investment in their adolescents and identified strongly with their adolescents' successes and failures. By being part of the program process the parents conveyed to their adolescents that they mattered and their needs were important. The parent process of developing an after-school program produced excellent program policies and procedures, an extensive guide in developing an after-school program and creative age appropriate activities for adolescents. However, the school district did not approve implementation of the after-school program and after the twelve-week period the parents were unable to provide supervision for their adolescents.

Although the outcomes did not indicate intended results, the materials created and the process for developing the after-school program by the parents were successful.

Recommendations

There are two recommendations for replicating the solution to unsupervised adolescents during after-school hours.

1. Both parents and schools must be totally committed to solving the problem. Talented,

energetic, and committed adults must meet the challenge of promoting safe and responsive supervision for the adolescents. Parents and schools must form a partnership to coordinate supervision, specify and communicate rules and expectations, establish communication channels, and support each other in defined roles.

2. The stakeholders of the problem, unsupervised adolescents, must be involved in the planning and design of the solution. Because adolescents present what often seem insurmountable challenges to the parents and school, parents must interact with the adolescents in formulating the activities and supervision. In developing age appropriate activities parents and schools must plan with, not for, young adolescents.

Dissemination

There are many activity and informational books available in providing supervision during the after-school hours. However, it is often difficult to determine which ideas work best. The parents chose adult supervision in an after-school program. The ideas, policies, and program procedures came from the parents' review of literature and their shared life experiences and visions. The program activities were a shared interaction of parents and adolescents. The materials presented in this practicum will be available for interested community members,

parents, or educators who might want to involve parents in providing supervision through after-school programs. The materials will be disseminated through presentations, writings, Internet, and on a one-to-one basis over an extended period of time.

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Appendix A

Parent Interest Survey

Parent Interest Survey

Dear Parent,

Please answer the following questions to assist in determining if there is a problem of adolescents being unsupervised.

1. Mark the activities you believe that most unsupervised adolescents do after school hours. (You may mark more than one.)
   Watch television ___ play video games ___ read ___
   Play sports ___ music ___
   Stay alone ___

2. Juvenile crime is on the increase in our community, circle two reasons for the increase?
   Television ___ peers ___ gangs ___ adults ___
   Family ___ idleness ___ society ___

3. What out-of-school time environment do you prefer? Mark two.
   Home ___ teen center ___ school ___
   Library ___ Boys/Girls Club ___ YMCA ___

4. Do you want input planning and creating programs for your adolescents?
   Yes ___ No ___

5. Mark reasons why middle school adolescents are unsupervised during the after school hours. (You may mark more than one.)
   Parents employed ___ cost of care ___ Unavailability ___
   Adolescent cares for siblings at home ___

6. Is your adolescent unsupervised during the after school hours?
   Yes ___ No ___

7. How much time is your child without adult supervision?
   Less than one hour ___ 1-3 hours ___ 3-5 hours ___
   5+ hours ___

8. Why does your child spend this time unsupervised?

No caregiver ___ parents employed ____
Unavailability of programs ___ programs too expensive __
Can take care of self ___

9. What activity does your child participate during the after school hours?
Television ___ reading ___ video games ___
Music ___ alone ___ school activities __

10. What activities would you like to see in an after school program?
Safety ___ adult supervision ___ self-exploration __
Choices ___ arts and crafts ___ physical activity __
Homework___ interaction with peers ___

Appendix B

After-school Activity Form

After-school Activity Form

List the four adolescent activities that you want developed for the after-school program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

(For any of the listed activities, please answer by circling Y= yes or N= no.)

1. The activity provides positive social interaction with peers or adults. Y N

2. The activity allows creative expression. Y N

3. The activity allows for the adolescent to be successful or feel competent. Y N

4. The activity allows for meaningful participation that is commensurate with their experience and skill. Y N

5. The activity offers volunteer opportunities, recreation, academic enrichment, career opportunities or new skills. Y N

6. The activity offers self-exploration and definition. Y N

7. The activity allows adolescents to work in groups, pair or teams, and accomplish a definite goal. Y N

8. The adolescent is given input into planning the activity. Y N

(Four or more yes responses indicate age appropriate, productive activities for adolescents.)

Appendix C

Age Appropriate Adolescent Activities

Age Appropriate Adolescent Activities

Activity	Description
1. Board Games	Construct your own board and share them with your friends.
2. Mask Making	Investigate the hidden faces and traditions of various cultures. Make your own mask
3. Creative Cooking	Cook simple recipes from other cultures then sample them.
4. Papermaking	Create original crafts from old paper.
5. Gifts Making	Create memorable gifts and discover the joy of giving.
6. Nature Thinking	Explore the environment and focus on energy exploration, recycling, and your natural habitat.
7. World Adventures	Learn about the solar system by investigating the investigating the constellations then construct a space station.
8. Inventing With A Flare	Learn about patents and famous inventors then design your own invention.
9. Be a Magician	Discover the world of magic by studying the art and perform simple magic tricks.
10. Homework Skills	Manage your homework by learning how to study.
11. Photography	Become an amateur photo-

	grapher by learning the correct way to use a camera.
12. Ceramics	Create your masterpiece from clay.
13. Drama Club	Write or select a play; design your own costumes and scenery then present to the school.
14. Friendly Computer	Become computer friendly; learn basic techniques.
15. Aviation is Fun	Find out about the history of aviation and design kites and paper airplanes.
16. Wiffle Ball 17. Ping Pong 18. Tennis 19. Volleyball	Become a team player and learn the basic skills of the sport.